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Severing the link with deprivation will lead to a considerable shift of health care funding away from the neediest, poorer areas of the North and the inner cities and towards the least needy, most affluent and most elderly areas of the South. It also means more money for Conservative voting areas and less for Labour voting areas.

The possible impact of any 'age-only' allocation plan can be examined by recalculating the 2011-12 NHS resource allocation by English Strategic Health Authorities (SHA).[1] Table 1 shows the changes to 2011-12 funding data when the co-efficient weightings for health-need, deprivation-related need and disability free life expectancy (DFLE) are removed. It demonstrates that if such an 'age-only' allocation approach had been taken in 2011-12 there would have been a 14.9% and 12.0% loss of resource in the poorer North East and North West regions (£265 and £209 per head). The regional winners under such an age-only allocation would have been the more affluent South East Coast and South Central areas with increases of 12.6% and 15.8% (£188 and £220 per head). Regions that would have the biggest gains have a higher proportion who voted Conservative; the biggest potential losses are concentrated in areas where there was more support for Labour.

This data suggests that an age-only NHS resource allocation model which ignores the important link between deprivation and health, would disproportionately benefit those areas of England that are the most healthy, the most affluent and the most likely to vote Conservative: *'Medicine is a social science, and politics nothing but medicine at a larger scale'*. [2]

Acknowledgements

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References

[1] Department of Health. *2011-12 PCT recurrent revenue allocations exposition book*.

[2] Virchow R. *Der Armenarzt Medicinische Reform*. 1848. 18:125–7.

Table 1: NHS Resource Allocation Targets by English Strategic Health Authority for 2011-12: current allocation compared to an age-only allocation plus contextual political and health-status variables

Strategic Health Authority	Actual Target Allocation (total in £000s) ⁱ	Age-only Target Allocation (total in £000s) ⁱⁱ	Total Target Allocation Loss/Gain (total in £000s)	% Loss/Gain	Actual Target Allocation (£ per head) ⁱⁱⁱ	Age-only Target Allocation (£ per head)	Per Head Target Allocation Loss/Gain	% Votes in 2010 General Election ^{iv}			% Men Employed 2001 census ^v	Disability Free Life Expectancy (DFLE) ^{vi}
								Lab	Cons	Lib Dem		
North East	4,652,886	3,961,395	-691,491	-14.9	1,786	1,520	-265	43.6	23.7	23.6	79.2	59.2
North West	12,167,111	10,705,518	-1,461,594	-12.0	1,740	1,531	-209	39.5	31.7	21.6	81.8	60.3
Yorkshire & Humber	8,587,295	8,087,966	-499,329	-5.8	1,599	1,506	-93	34.7	32.5	23	84.1	61.3
West Midlands	8,884,226	8,433,636	-450,590	-5.1	1,615	1,533	-82	30.6	39.5	20.5	84.7	62.0
London	12,818,512	12,757,403	-61,109	-0.5	1,624	1,616	-8	36.6	34.5	22.1	83.8	63.5
East Midlands	6,924,027	6,894,579	-29,448	-0.4	1,542	1,536	-7	29.8	41.2	20.8	86.2	62.2
South West	8,081,092	8,681,959	600,867	7.4	1,513	1,626	113	15.4	42.8	34.7	87.8	64.9
East England	8,641,613	9,491,112	849,500	9.8	1,470	1,615	145	19.6	47.1	24.1	89.4	65.1
South East Coast	6,559,161	7,383,034	823,872	12.6	1,496	1,684	188	16.2	49.9	26.2	89.9	65.2
South Central	5,825,754	6,745,075	919,321	15.8	1,394	1,614	220	16.2	49.9	26.2	89.9	65.6
England	83,141,677	83,141,677	0	0	1,580	1,580	0	28.1	39.6	24.2	85.7	63.4

ⁱ Data from '2011-12 PCT recurrent revenue allocations exposition book'. Population allocation is weighted by age, market costs, a health and deprivation need score, and a DFLE weight.

ⁱⁱ Recalculated from '2011-12 PCT recurrent revenue allocations exposition book' omitting health need and deprivation need coefficient weightings, and the DFLE weight.

ⁱⁱⁱ Target allocation divided by crude population rate

^{iv} Indicative BBC data on the proportion voting for the three main political parties (Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat) at regional level in the 2010 General Election. Electoral data is only available for 9 regions so here the South East Coast and South Central SHAs both have electoral data from the South East region. Data is indicative only as regional electoral geographies do not necessarily match SHA boundaries. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/election2010/results/region/48.stm>

^v Data for men age 16-59 from Bamba and Popham (2010) 'Worklessness and regional differences in the social gradient in general health: Evidence from the 2001 English census', *Health and Place*, 16: 1014-1021. Data is only available for 9 regions so here the South East Coast and South Central SHAs both have employment data from the South East region.

^{vi} 2005 DFLE by SHA calculated from PCT level data from '2011-12 PCT recurrent revenue allocations exposition book' (weighted by number of PCTs not population size).

Table 1: NHS 'Age-only' Resource Allocation Targets by English Strategic Health Authority for 2011-12 plus contextual political variables

Strategic Health Authority	Total Target Allocation Loss/Gain (total in £000s) ⁱ	% Loss/Gain	Per Head Target Allocation Loss/Gain £ ⁱⁱ	% Votes in 2010 General Election ⁱⁱⁱ	
				<i>Lab</i>	<i>Cons</i>
North East	-691,491	-14.9	-265	43.6	23.7
North West	-1,461,594	-12.0	-209	39.5	31.7
Yorkshire & Humber	-499,329	-5.8	-93	34.7	32.5
West Midlands	-450,590	-5.1	-82	30.6	39.5
London	-61,109	-0.5	-8	36.6	34.5
East Midlands	-29,448	-0.4	-7	29.8	41.2
South West	600,867	7.4	113	15.4	42.8
East England	849,500	9.8	145	19.6	47.1
South East Coast	823,872	12.6	188	16.2	49.9
South Central	919,321	15.8	220	16.2	49.9
England	0	0	0	28.1	39.6

ⁱ Data calculated from '2011-12 PCT recurrent revenue allocations exposition book' with population weights for health need, deprivation and DFLE removed

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_124949

ⁱⁱ Age-only target allocation divided by crude population rate

ⁱⁱⁱ Indicative BBC data on the proportion voting for Labour and Conservative at regional level in the 2010 General Election. Electoral data is only available for 9 regions so here the South East Coast and South Central SHAs both have electoral data from the South East region. Data is indicative only as regional electoral geographies do not necessarily match SHA boundaries. Available at:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/election2010/results/region/48.stm>